

## RETURN

[278]

REPORT in the matter of a Formal Investigation into the Causes which led to the Stranding of the British Steamship *Montfort*, on Beauport Bank, River St. Lawrence, on Tuesday, April 28, 1914, held in the Wreck Commissioner's Court, Montreal, on Tuesday, May 5, 1914, before Commander Henry St. George Lindsay, R.D., R.N.R., Dominion Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Captain Francis Nash and Captain Joseph Ostens Grey, acting as Assessors.

The British steamship *Montfort*, official No. 110,568; gross tonnage, 6,578; owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, Montreal, Canada, and engaged in the Canadian service, sailed from Antwerp, bound for Quebec and Montreal, on April 15, 1914, with 162 passengers and a general cargo, having on board a crew of 95 all told, and was apparently well found and equipped in every respect, and arrived at Father Point, in the gulf of St. Lawrence, on Monday, April 27, at 5.19 p.m., the ship drawing about 21 feet 7 inches forward and 21 feet 10 inches aft, and after embarking Francois Gaudreau, a special pilot for the Pilotage District of Quebec, proceeded on her voyage towards Quebec.

Everything appears to have gone well during the run up the Lower St. Lawrence, the vessel passing Quarantine at about 6.55 a.m., Tuesday, April, 28, the usual courses being steered, and the weather appears to have been fine and clear throughout the night and early morning. At 8.16, according to the company's regulations, all hands came on stations, and standby was ordered on the engine room telegraph. At 8.18 west end of Orleans island was abeam one-quarter of a mile off, and a course (W. by N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N.) was ordered by the pilot. At 8.19 the speed was reduced to half speed, and at 8.22 a.m. to slow. Shortly after this the vessel ran into a dense fog, and thinking that the vessel was too near to the Lévis shore, on account of his hearing the noise of a hydraulic rivetting machine on the port side, the pilot gave orders to port the helm, which was done, and the vessel's head swung off to N.W. by compass. About this time the leadsman reported four and a half fathoms, and before the next sounding could be taken the vessel took the ground on Beauport bank, about two and a half miles below Quebec, and one and one-quarter miles to the westward of the west point of the Isle of Orleans, where she remained until assisted off at 8 a.m. on the 29th. No apparent damage was reported after examination by divers at Montreal.

It would appear that about the time the vessel stranded the master superseded the pilot in the management of the ship, as he saw that the latter had apparently become bewildered as to the ship's position.

### FINDING.

The court, after considering the evidence adduced in this case, is unanimous in its opinion that the stranding of the steamship *Montfort* was caused entirely by the want of skill and poor judgment displayed by Pilot Francois Gaudreau, inasmuch as he appears to have lost all knowledge of the position of his vessel after entering the fog, and the court considers that his local knowledge, and his knowledge of the tides and the ice movement, should have prompted him to do the only proper thing possible under the circumstances, and to anchor, until he found out his actual position.

The court therefore suspends the license of Francois Gaudreau, the pilot, for a period of three calendar months from this date.



4 GEORGE V., A. 1914

No blame, in the opinion of the court, can be attached to the master and officers of the ship, as everything appears to have been done by them to assist in the proper navigation of the vessel, and the court considers that the master was perfectly justified in taking the ship out of the pilot's hands, although unfortunately not in time to prevent the stranding, and commends him for his action.

The fact that all the aids to navigation were not in place on April 27, in the opinion of the court, has no material bearing on this stranding.

Dated at Ottawa this ninth day of May, 1914.

H. ST. G. LINDSAY,  
*Dominion Wreck Commissioner.*

Concurred in:

FRANCIS NASH,  
J. O. GRAY,  
*Assessors.*

Read in open court at Montreal, Quebec, this 11th day of May, 1914.

H. ST. G. LINDSAY,  
*Dominion Wreck Commissioner.*









